

to the forms and proportions of the iron structures employed therein, would be highly inexpedient.

The Harbours of Refuge now constructing at Dover, and in the Channel Islands, by Mr. Walker, at Portland and Holyhead by Mr. Rendel, the docks at Leith and Grimsby also by the latter gentleman, the lighthouses at the Bishop's Rock by Mr. Walker, and at the Skerryvore by Mr. Alan Stevenson, were noticed with great commendation, as most important works, admirably designed and executed.

The railway system of the country was then commented on; and it was stated, that there were now nearly 8,500 miles of railway completed in Great Britain, at a cost of 220,000,000*l.*, derived from private sources, and expended within the realm, encouraging, in a remarkable degree, productive industry of all kinds, and inducing a revolution in all mercantile transactions and social relations.

The example of England was noticed, in boldly abandoning the finest roads, and adopting throughout the length and breadth of the land a network of iron ways, over which, by the aid of steam, passengers and merchandise could be conveyed with a velocity which, at its original proposition, was deemed worse than visionary; which, first filling the Continent with amazement, eventually compelled imitation, and thus would ultimately introduce wants, and consequently civilisation, to the most remote corners of the world. "If," continued the President, "this be true, we are naturally led to inquire who were the authors of this great revolution? what minds conceived, and what energies executed these vast projects? The reply, gentlemen, must spring spontaneously from you all—the Civil and Mechanical Engineers have been the great actors in this most interesting chapter of the social history of our country."

The junior members of the profession were then addressed as to the opening now offered for the exhibition of their talents, in the various subjects connected with the sanitary question.

CURRENT ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITIONS.

THE letters we have received during the last fortnight on the subject of current competitions, would nearly fill our present number. To print them is, therefore, out of the question; nor would any advantage be made in the reformation of the management of competitions if we did so. They all tell the same story, again and again, of broken faith and insulting offers, which simple exposure has, up to this time, failed to prevent. We would here further observe, that anonymous letters conveying personal imputations, cannot receive from us any attention.

Leicester Union Workhouse Enlargement.—On this we have a dozen communications. One known architect, not a competitor, or connected with one, says, that great injustice has been done to unsuccessful competitors by the decision come to by the guardians.

"The first of the 'instructions to architects' runs thus:—'The workhouse to be enlarged so as to provide day-rooms and dormitories for 1,000 inmates, classified, &c., &c. The board-room, with the two ante-rooms and closet adjoining, and the rooms over, will not require alteration.' And the fifth thus:—'It is the wish of the guardians that as much of the workhouse shall be retained as is possible.' Yet in the face of these instructions, the guardians, I find, have decided upon adopting a plan for an entirely new building, although they have just paid for two sets of plans, one for an enlargement of the present building, and one for a new building, by another architect. Upon a moderate calculation, seven sheets of drawing-paper, measuring at least 39 inches by 24 inches, would have to be well covered with intricate work in the way of line drawing, tinting, and writing, to illustrate a design in accordance with the instructions, to say nothing of the folios of specification and estimates necessary, to explain these seven sheets of laborious drawings; and ten out of the eleven sets of drawings sent in are thrown back upon their authors' hands, not, forsooth, because the alterations and additions are not cleverly devised, but because the guardians choose to

nullify their printed and issued resolutions by adopting a plan in no way in accordance with them."

Another says, "I take for granted that there cannot be two opinions on the conduct of the Board of Guardians, who, after inviting architects to furnish plans in competition for alterations and additions to the present workhouse, allow a plan for an entirely new building to be sent in by a favoured townsman, and adopt that in the face of the instructions to architects, the terms upon which the competition was entered into, and according to which the merits of the plans ought to have been judged."

Birmingham Institution for the Blind.—Advertisement was for elevation only.—30*l.* for first, 10*l.* for second. "One of the 32," who have sent in, asserts that the plans were first obtained by specious suggestions to one who applied early for instructions, that if he sent in plans (which he did), competition would probably be avoided.

Assembly-Room, Newbury.—Ten pounds are offered for plans and specifications of an assembly-room, not to exceed cost of 1,000*l.*,—or not half what ought to be paid for them, if ordered without risk of rejection. A correspondent complains that when he wrote for information and instructions of what was actually wanted, reply was, "I have none to send you!"

Independents' Chapel, Gloucester.—About forty plans were sent in by twenty-nine architects. Design selected is by Mr. Medland, of that city. Concerning this, too, we have complaints, but they are anonymous.

St. Thomas's Church, Newport.—The last we heard of this was, that the selection rested between Mr. Johnson and Mr. Daukes; Mr. Stratton, townsman, third; and that Mr. Withers would have been fourth but that the supporters of his design came too late. Correspondents state that the Committee ordered the number of plans to be reduced by the subscribers (each donor of 5*l.* having a vote) to six, from which one is to be selected by a London architect of celebrity."

BRISTOL AND WEST OF ENGLAND ARCHITECTURAL SOCIETY.

IN your paper of January 5th, I observe a communication from "B." in which he states that a church, in which many important features are copied from "Brandon's Analysis," has been erected under the auspices of a society which has constituted itself the arbiter of the ecclesiastical architecture of the "far west." I presume he alludes to St. Jude's, the last church which was consecrated. I feel bound, therefore, to correct him in his error, which he has so broadly stated, and to assure you that not a single drawing of the above church was laid before the Architectural Society, nor has there been any communication with the society about it, nor have I myself ever seen a drawing or a single stone of it.

What the society did do was to recommend that a different set of plans should be adopted from those which were at first drawn, and that the Middle Pointed, and not the Third Pointed style should be employed: but the plans so altered were never laid before the society.

So much for "B.'s" facts.

But I think I may be allowed to add, that he seems also to have mistaken the province of an architectural society. The great point which this society aims at is to secure a correct ritual arrangement of the church; and being satisfied that there are no anachronisms or anomalies in the style, &c., of the plans submitted, it is very careful not to interfere with those parts which are merely matters of taste, and which must needs vary according to the talent of the respective architects.

Were the society to alter every window, door-case, moulding, &c., according to its own taste, architects would be mere draughtsmen in their hands; and I think you will agree with me that they would become more servile copyists by this means than by any other; and further, a gross injustice would be done to architects of talent and experience, by putting all men on the same level.

I believe that any architect who has laid plans before this society would bear me out in

stating that, while we are most unflinching in the condemnation of what is incorrect, we are most careful to maintain the independence and freedom of the architect in matters which are arbitrary. ECCLES. J. CARTER, Hon. Sec.

GREAT SUSPENSION BRIDGE IN RUSSIA.

CONSIDERABLE interest has been excited in St. Petersburg by the model of a suspension bridge across the river Dnieper, at Kieff, one of the principal cities of Russia, mentioned by us before it was sent from London. Mr. Vignoles is the engineer, from whose designs, and under whose immediate directions, this bridge is now constructing. It has four principal openings, each of 440 feet, and two side openings of 235 feet each, and also a passage of 50 feet on the right shore, spanned by a swivel bridge, opening for the passage of the steamboats and other river craft. The ways through the piers have a clear breadth of 28 feet, and a height of 35 feet to the soffit of the semicircular arches. The platform has nearly 53 feet of extreme breadth, of which 35 feet are exclusively devoted to the carriage-way; the platform is suspended by chains, all on the same horizontal plane, two on each side of the road; the footpaths project beyond the chains, and are carried by cantilevers round the piers exteriorly, so that the foot passengers are completely separated from the horsemen and carriages. The chains are composed of links 12 feet long, and each weighing about 4 cwt.; eight links form the breadth of each chain, and the total length measured along their curves is about four English miles. For the swivel-bridge the iron employed is almost exclusively malleable; the breadth of the platform is nearly 53 feet, and the weight of iron employed scarcely exceeds 100 tons. The bridge is moved horizontally (on the same principle that locomotive engines are sent round on the large turntables at a railway station), and by the efforts of four men only, acting on a very simple apparatus.

The total weight of iron used in the construction of the bridge is about 3,300 tons, including the machinery employed in the various stages of its construction. The whole was made in England. A regular commissariat is attached to the establishment, and the whole organisation of service is very complete. Not the least remarkable part of the establishment is that for the manufacture of the hydraulic cement required for the foundations and masonry. It is, in fact, an artificial Pozzolano, made from a peculiar clay found in the Kieff hills, and prepared on the principles laid down by Vicat. The buildings for this purpose are very extensive. Eight large roasting ovens, besides numerous grinding-mills, are in constant action; the quantity manufactured is upwards of 300 bushels (or about 500 cubic feet) in every twenty-four hours. The cost of the bridge, exclusive of the approaches, will be upwards of 420,000*l.*

DIRECTORIES.

The Official and Legal Directory for 1850.

—This is a very handsome volume, perhaps handsomer than necessary, considering it is to last but a year, comprising, with a "Diary," an official, legal, parliamentary, banking, and insurance directory. For the diary, half a large octavo page of writing paper is appropriated to each day. The Directory is capably printed by Vizetelly and Co., by whom also it is published.

Who's Who in 1850, is a smaller Directory, published by Bailly, Brothers,† referring only to persons of station, and scarcely going so far as its clever title would lead to the anticipation of.

The Post Magazine Almanac and Court and Parliamentary Register (a good six-penorth) gives a considerable amount of information on the subject of insurance offices.

Boque's Pocket Diary and Calendar has a line for the engagement of the day, and two blank leaves after each monthly division for memoranda unconnected with dates.

† Peterborough-court, Fleet-street.

‡ Royal Exchange-buildings, Cornhill.